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Draft Presidential Speech

Berlin, June 12, 1987

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President von Weizsaecker, Chancellor Kohl, Governing Mayor

Diepgen -- My Fellow Berliners

What a thrill it is to be here today. Nancy and I are moved deeply by the welcome you have given us.

When I learned that Berlin would celebrate its 750th anniversary this year, I wanted very much to be present. To Americans, 750 years is a long time.

But this moment -- and this place -- marks more than a birthday. This terrible wall behind us is a reminder that there are two birthday parties going on in Berlin this year.

Berliners on the East side of that wall have little to celebrate. They are being forced to endure a glorification of communist dictatorship. Mammoth buildings and military parades cannot hide the sad truth which is symbolized so poignantly by the spot at which we are standing today.

Rising above this great avenue is a gate -- the Brandenburg Gate. Through this portal have marched conquering armies and great heroes. It was also witness to a march of a

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different sort -- the demonstration by workers in East Berlin on June 17, 1953.

Blocking our approach to that gate is a wall. As the great American poet Robert Frost once wrote: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." And standing here today, we can understand better than any place on earth how tragic it is to close the gates which allow contact between people.

Here in the West, you are using Berlin's birthday to honor the human riches of this city. Even more, you are taking a look at the future. You are searching for ways to tear down the walls which divide cities and continents.

But no amount of concrete, border guards or barbed wire can divide the spirit of Berliners East and West. Regardless how hard the communist masters may try, they cannot erase the fact that Berliners on both sides of the wall feel as one people and one city. Your courage and your unity will ensure that -- one day -- this ugly wall will disappear.

Let us hope fervently for that day. You, Mayor Diepgen, are a young leader. You have many years of achievement in front of you. I have no doubt that with determination and fortitude by all concerned, we will one day see you installed where you belong -- in the historic Berlin Rathaus. We can see

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it there, through the Brandenburg Gate. As the only democratically elected mayor of Greater Berlin, you belong there!

When this day comes, it will be the accomplishment of the people of Berlin. And people is what this city has always been about. There are few riches in the sandy soil and the flat marshes of the Spree and Havel valleys. No gold or oil or even rich farmland has made Berlin a center of industry and culture.

People -- that's what Berlin means to me. And during my stay here today, I will make a special effort to honor the people of this great city. I have met with some extraordinary Berliners. Some carried out heroic resistance to the Nazi regime. Some helped rebuild the city after the war. Some escaped from that workers' paradise in the East, often endangering their lives. And some are building the Berlin of the future.

What they all have in common is what Americans like to think of themselves. They did not allow themselves to be discouraged. No government or system could tell them how to live their lives. They saw themselves as free men and women. And they succeeded.

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I am here today, then, to deliver America's best wishes to the people of all of Berlin. To show our love and our gratitude this afternoon, we will give an American-style birthday party at Tempelhof Airport. It will be dedicated to the people of this city, both East and West.

I also bear a message extending beyond Berlin to Europe and the world. I understand the fear of war and the pain of division which afflict this continent. We must find ways to address these problems soberly and effectively.

The solution is to move toward a more open world. In the East, stirrings of interest in openness -- or "glasnost" -- have begun, stimulated by the powerful example of the West and the yearnings of the ordinary people there. In the Soviet Union, in the third world, they are seeing that freedom works. We are prepared to cooperate with the East to promote true openness, to break down the artificial barriers which divide people, and to create a safer world. And there is no place better than Berlin, at the edge of East and West, to make a start. I will advance some concrete proposals to this end.

The Challenge of Western Security and a Lasting Peace

But before discussing in detail where we ought to go, I would like to review how far we have come in the past few years.

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You know that this isn't my first visit to this great city. I came here last in 1982 when some believed that severe tensions were brewing between East and West.

Those were difficult years for many of us. While the Soviet Union continued to expand its military forces, we and our allies were working hard to guarantee Western security at the lowest possible level of armaments. We sought, for the first time, negotiated arms reductions with the Soviet Union. But if we couldn't move forward, we were determined to meet the dangerous new Soviet military challenge -- hundreds of new SS-20 missiles capable of striking every capital in Western Europe -- by stationing modernized intermediate nuclear forces in Europe.

Those were days of complex discussions and painful decisions. But you know when I think back to my visit to Germany in that June of 1982, I don't dwell on these pressing problems. Instead, my thoughts again turn to people. In this case, especially the young people I saw and heard during my stay.

When I was in Bonn five years ago, the leaders of the NATO alliance were meeting at the seat of government of the most democratic state ever to exist on German soil. A main item on their agenda was a program to strengthen the security of the West.

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On the opposite bank of the Rhine, more than 200,000 young people determined to express their disagreement with their own government and with the NATO leaders meeting in Bonn. They were angry at what we were doing and didn't mind saying so. Many believed they were involved in the most important crusade of their lives.

At that moment, I was deeply moved by the importance of the responsibility which had been placed in our hands. We had before us an example of the greatest treasure any nation could possess -- the freedom of all citizens to protest openly against the views of their leaders.

I knew that many of those young people would not believe that I yearned for peace as much or more than they did. My instinct said that they would find it hard to believe that modernization of NATO weapons would help achieve this peace.

But above all, my heart told me that my fellow leaders and I must persevere just because of those young people across the Rhine. If we did not remain determined, and strengthen the defense of Europe, their right to demonstrate could be endangered.

At the same time, I was touched deeply by the pain felt by a younger generation which could not understand building more weapons in a world already threatened by nuclear annihilation.

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I was resolved to do something about this threat. And so I proposed the drastic reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and the elimination of an entire category of nuclear weapons -- intermediate-range nuclear forces.

And you know, I may be getting older, but I still know to dream. Removing the threat of nuclear annihilation remains my personal vision for the next century. Today I wish to promise again to exert every effort, follow every lead and consider every possibility which will lead to true arms control between East and West.

As I pondered these problems in 1982, I saw even more clearly how important it was that I visit Berlin. Berlin was the one place on earth to reaffirm my vision of a world free of tensions and the threat of nuclear war.

The Berlin initiative for Peace

So I came to Berlin and spoke at the Charlottenburg Palace. It was in this city that I presented the "Berlin Initiative for Peace."

Amid the controversies over arms control, I wished to use this speech to speak directly to the military problems facing us. I recalled the build-up of Soviet nuclear and conventional

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arms and called on the Soviet Union to negotiate seriously towards true reductions of all weapons of war.

I indicated our willingness to move toward a Conference on Disarmament in Europe. And I added a new proposal. I called for discussions leading to measures to prevent the outbreak of accidental nuclear war. I proposed notification of strategic exercises, of missile launches, and expanded exchange of strategic forces data. This proposal has evolved into negotiations with the Soviet Union on establishing nuclear risk reduction centers. These talks have made significant progress. The Berlin Initiative has yielded useful results.

But the American message for Berlin has never been limited to military defense. Today as in 1982, I want especially to use Berlin as a spot to remind all of us about the second important requirement for peace -- respect for the dignity of individual human beings.

The East-West Balance Sheet

My last visit to Berlin was five years ago, almost to the day. Much has happened. Despite predictions of disaster, the West did move forward with deployment of new medium range weapons. Guided by the courage of leaders such as Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher, we secured the important security partnership between the United States and Europe.

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Contrary to dire predictions, East-West relations did not enter a permanent freeze after the West took this necessary step. Contacts have expanded in many fields. At Geneva and again Reykjavik, Chairman Gorbachev and I made important progress towards meaningful reductions of nuclear weapons.

Talks aimed at reducing all types of nuclear armaments continue in Geneva. The outlook for progress is encouraging. I hope to meet again with Chairman Gorbachev later this year in Washington to conclude agreements on intermediate-range nuclear arms and other critical issues.

In Vienna, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has again taken up its work. Follow-up meetings held since conclusion of the Madrid Conference have clarified important issues. Particularly in the field of human rights and human contacts, the East seems more willing to enter a true discussion. This gives us hope.

An important step forward was taken at the Stockholm Conference. For the first time, important measures to increase openness of military forces, to reduce the risk of war through accident or miscalculation, will apply to all of Europe. We are working closely with our allies to move towards a second phase, which will concentrate on establishing a real conventional military balance in Europe.

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The dynamic development of the West

But just as exciting as the progress in East-West relations has been the dynamic development of the West. Shielded by our common defense, the West has flourished over the last five years. Dire predictions of "eurosclerosis" or trade wars between Europe and America have not been borne out. On both sides of the Atlantic we see a new spirit of optimism, creativity, and innovation. Our belief in people has again paid off. We are at the beginning of an era of unprecedented prosperity and justice, in the West and in many other parts of the world.

Thirty years ago, many in the West took seriously Nikita Khrushchev's claim that he would bury the United States. To some it even seemed plausible that the communist world might overtake the West in production and standard of living by the 1970's.

Many emerging nations thought that the centrally controlled, dogmatic Soviet model might help them skip the painfully slow process of development. Pluralism was considered too disorganized and inefficient to meet the impatient needs of the Third World. As late as the 1970's some of our young people believed that a Marxist model should even be adopted in the West.

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Well, you don't hear these arguments much today. The intervening years have shown even more clearly that democracy, not communism, is the wave of the future.

If freedom were not so strong, the East would not need to wall in its populations.

If democracy were not so attractive, the East would have no need to imprison human rights activists.

If our open economic system were not so productive, the East would have no need to steal our advanced technology and scientific secrets.

These lessons have not been lost on the West, or the Third World.

Wherever we look, individual enterprise is being unleashed. Western Europe is exploding with energy.

In Western Europe, the European Communities are making steady progress towards true unity based on democratic principles. America welcomes Western European unity as an essential prerequisite to reunification of the entire continent.

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Newly prosperous nations of the Third World are setting a breathtaking pace and teaching us many lessons about our own economic system. And the foundation for this economic progress is increasingly democracy and the rule of law. Dramatic examples such as the Philippines and Argentina should not allow us to forget the steady, less observed progress towards democracy being made nearly everywhere.

Reaching Toward the East -- Glasnost

The East may also be increasingly alert to the benefits of freedom. Fifteen years ago when the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin was signed, communist leaders still believed that they could build a modern society. They had falsely concluded that Western willingness to cooperate meant acceptance of repression and dictatorship. They saw the division of Europe as the permanent foundation for life on this continent.

Let us recall that the first challenge to this thesis came not from the West, but from the people of the East themselves. Within weeks after signature of the Helsinki Final Act, their own citizens began demanding fulfillment of their democratic rights.

Civil rights groups such as the Helsinki Monitors sprung up in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe. A bit

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more than a year ago, Berliners were thrilled by the release of Anatoli Shcharanskiy on the Glienicke Bridge. This hero of democracy choose to spend more than ten years in prison rather than abandon his search for democracy in the Soviet Union.

And so it has been throughout the communist world. Be they Soviet Jews, Charter 77 activists in Czechoslovakia or members of Solidarity in Poland -- the people of the East have sent a clear message. They want freedom.

The same message has come from the economic system in the East. It is old, rusty and backward. It can barely meet basic human needs let alone the challenges of modern science and technology.

Economies burdened by heavy military spending and centralized bureaucracy cannot succeed. Populations repressed by dictatorship and censorship will never be productive.

Again, it is not the West which is making these claims, it is the leadership of the Soviet Union itself. It is they who are cataloging the failures of the closed societies. It is they who have given us a new word -- glasnost -- to describe what we have known for a long time -- that people want to be free.

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The United States and Berlin

Nowhere is the lesson of freedom and the need to defend it clearer than in Berlin. For more than forty years, the unity of Berliners and Allies and the strong support of the entire Western world has ensured the liberty and prosperity of the Western Sectors of Berlin.

The United States remains as committed to the freedom of the Western Sectors today as in the past. This commitment continues to be based on the Quadripartite rights and responsibilities for Berlin and Germany as a whole which we maintain jointly with our Western Allies and the Soviet Union.

These rights apply to all four sectors of Berlin. Despite claims to the contrary, the Eastern Sector is not the capital of the German Democratic Republic. I am determined to ensure that it never will be.

Based on these rights, the United States will continue to pursue strict observance and full implementation of all parts of the Quadripartite Agreement of September 3, 1971. We hope to work even more energetically with our British and French allies and with authorities in Bonn and Berlin to ensure that more is achieved in all areas, including those sections which reconfirm the important ties which exist between Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany.

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We see this responsibility as both a duty and a sacred trust. Our duty is to the people of Germany and Europe and to ourselves. If we allowed democracy to be undermined in Berlin, our own freedom could soon be questioned. The Western Sectors of Berlin are not merely under the protection of the West, they are part of the West.

Berlin and the division of Europe

But so too is all of Europe. The United States is a nation of immigrants. Over there across the wall is as much the source of our heritage as is the West. We have never divided this great continent into artificial categories of East and West. For us, Warsaw, Prague and Budapest are just as much a part of our cultural and political heritage as are London, Paris or Rome.

We cannot accept this artificial division of Germany and of other proud nations from their natural cultural homeland in the West. For America, our role in Berlin transcends the specific problems of this city, however tragic they may be. As we look at that horrible wall behind us, we should remember that it symbolizes the violent division of nearly half of Europe from its cultural and political roots.

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Thus, in a very real way for the United States, maintenance of our rights and responsibilities for Berlin and Germany as a whole is a commitment of historical proportions.

As long as these rights remain, the West will have refused to recognize the incorporation of half of Europe into a Soviet sphere of influence. As long as these rights remain, the Soviets are obliged to recall the promises of democracy and self-determination for Europe they made more than 40 years ago.

People of the World -- Look toward Berlin

Several times in the postwar era, Berlin sent a signal to the rest of the world. Your resistance to Soviet threats helped focus American attention on a new challenge in Europe. Your courage following construction of the Berlin Wall thrilled a watching world.

And again today, Berlin can send a signal which will be heard wherever men and women yearn for freedom. I wish to join with you today to echo the words of Ernst Reuter.

"Ihr Voelker der Welt - Schaut auf diese Stadt." (People of the world - pay attention to this city).

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On that ninth of September, 1948, 350,000 Berliners gathered not far from here in front of the destroyed Reichstag. They gathered to protest the Soviet blockade of their city. They called on the West -- on America, Britain, and France to help maintain the freedom of Berlin.

Today, the time again has come to watch Berlin. A city which has flourished under difficult circumstances. A city which takes the limitations of its strange situation as a challenge rather than a burden. A city in which citizens of four nations -- America, France and Great Britain as well as Germany -- work in close harmony to provide a model of democratic cooperation.

A model of democratic cooperation. Of free men and women working together to find peace and prosperity under freedom.

A New Signal From Berlin

That to me is the new Signal from Berlin. A free and open society. A path toward an open Europe and an open world. The elimination of artificial barriers between people. This is my dream.

There are voices in the East also calling for openness, by its Russian name, "glasnost". I am not sure that they mean

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what we mean by openness. But we should put it to the test. We should work together to make a better world for all of us.

And so I wish to take this opportunity to also look toward the East; to speak directly to the leaders of the communist world. I say to you:

Let us use the occasion of Berlin's 750th anniversary to send a signal of peace and openness. Let us begin to spread openness throughout Europe by beginning in Berlin.

We must strive to implement more fully implement the provisions of the Quadripartite Agreement -- especially those calling for maintenance and development of the vital ties between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Western Sectors. I am disappointed that up to now there has been more hindrance from the Eastern side than help in fulfilling this important obligation.

Let us agree to increase the possibilities for human contacts between the Western and Eastern parts of the city. Travel and visits should be easier, expanded cultural and educational contacts made possible. This would be a modest but useful step toward openness.

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We should work together to solve the urgent problems of modern society. I therefore propose that you agree to the scheduling of United Nations Conferences in the Western Sectors. Or why not organize conferences to be held in both parts of the city?

We cooperate in many fields as part of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. As the Vienna meeting concludes, let us agree to hold a follow-up meeting in Berlin, alternating between the two parts of the city.

I would also be pleased to schedule an important arms control negotiation in the two parts of Berlin. Talks on conventional force reductions will hopefully begin soon. What better place to hold them than in the two parts of Berlin?

Many other possibilities could be considered. The Republic of Korea has made an important contribution to peace by suggesting that some events of the 1988 Olympics be held in North Korea. Why not organize the 1992 Olympic Games in both parts of this great city?

Finally, I think we should work together as we did fifteen years ago to reduce the practical barriers to more openness in Berlin.

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In the modern age, effective air connections are key to the economic health of any major city. They are vital to fostering human contacts and economic ties. They are an essential ingredient in creating the openness we seek -- breaking down artificial barriers between people and nations. Given its unusual location, aviation is doubly important to Berlin -- it is the city's lifeline. Yet the aviation regime in Berlin is subject to severe strictures totally out of step with present-day needs.

Therefore, I propose that we negotiate a more modern air regime for Berlin, one which will help open Berlin to Europe and the world and secure the city's future. The United States is prepared, on the basis of our Quadripartite rights and responsibilities for Berlin and Germany as a whole, to examine all reasonable means to achieve this end.

Realization of these ideas will not change the map of Europe or even Berlin overnight. But they will give proof of our determination to move forward.

Moving Toward A Global Democratic Community

I am convinced that openness can move beyond Berlin to Europe and the world. I know it may sound revolutionary. Some will say the East is threatened by openness. But I say the

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East, like the Third World, can only benefit from true openness -- and in the long run, cannot survive without it.

Today there is no question about which philosophy will guide the future of this planet. We are moving toward a global democratic community. At first it is being tied together by the miracles of technology. Later, I am convinced that we will build a true partnership of values among peoples of all continents -- an Open World.

Five years ago, I spoke in a period of tension and doubt. I presented a simple message -- that democracy is the best hope for a peaceful and prosperous world.

Today we are buoyed by success. Our Western world has reached a level of strength and prosperity which might have seemed impossible even five years ago.

We have proven that democracy can solve even the most complicated problems within our own societies. We have also observed how democracy can provide hope for hundreds of millions of people in the Third World.

Now we must look to the future. Now that our defenses are strong, our economies are growing and our values are secure -- now we must dedicate ourselves to solving one of the most

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difficult problems of the twentieth century -- the search for a unified and above all democratic Europe.

If a new democratic global community is to begin anywhere, it should be in Europe.

Europe is the cradle of modern life. Ideas of justice, equality and individual rights originated here. Modern methods of science and technology were exported from Europe to all parts of the globe.

Europe must be reunited. Barriers to contact must be torn down. We should begin with the ugly wall which divides this great city. We should continue by helping people in East Germany and Eastern Europe to enjoy full self-determination and democratic rights.

Forty years ago this June, Secretary of State George Marshall presented the Marshall Plan to the Harvard commencement. This plan was part of the vision for a prosperous, united Europe, a vision offered equally to East and West. At the time the division of Europe prevented our hopes from being fulfilled throughout the continent, although the recovery of Western Europe was a spectacular success, due in great part to the spirit of transatlantic cooperation which prevailed. We have not lost our vision of forty years ago for a united Europe. It is one I would like to reaffirm today.

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To pursue this quest, we should learn from the lessons of the past five years. First and foremost, we must recognize the importance of unity and persistence. Unity in defining our values and interests and persistence in attacking the injustices we see before us.

To achieve this goal, we must pursue efforts towards practical cooperation with the East. We must examine all, possibilities to reduce arms and ease military confrontation. We must seek mutually beneficial avenues of trade. We must encourage the free flow of people and ideas.

But above all we be confident and hopeful. We have no need to sacrifice our principles, such as the status of Berlin, in search of weak compromises from the East. If we pursue our goals, carefully, honestly and with conviction, we cannot fail. The long division of the continent is a tragedy, but the play is not over.

Our job is to make the Signal from Berlin understood throughout Europe. Our message is not confrontation, not aggression. Our message is a readiness to work honestly and openly with the East to live together in an open world -- a world without walls. Let us step forward to meet this historic challenge.

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